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ACTION EA-12INFO    OCT-01    ADS-00    HA-06    CIAE-00    DODE-00    PM-07    H-01  
         INR-10    L-03    NSAE-00    NSC-05    PA-01    SP-02    SS-15  
         ICA-11    IO-14    /088 W

-----030862    281853Z /50

P 240547Z SEP 80  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9269  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
SA CINCUNC KS  
CHJUSMAG SEOUL KS  
COMUSKOREA SEOUL KS//BJ-IS  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 12444

E.O. 12065:    GDS 09/24/86 (GLEYSTEN, W. H.) OR-M  
TAGS:    MARR PINT KS US  
SUBJECT:    CALL ON DEFENSE MINISTER CHOO

REF:    (A) SEOUL 11578 (NOTAL), (B) SEOUL 12233 (NOTAL)

1.    (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2.    I VISITED MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE CHOO YOUNG BOCK  
(M-R: CHU YONG-POK) SEPTEMBER 22 IN MAKING MY ROUND OF  
COURTESY CALLS ON ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW CABINET.3.    I NOTED THE CAUTIOUS U.S. PUBLIC STATEMENT AFTER THE  
VERDICT IN THE KIM DAE JUNG (M-R: KIM TAE-CHUNG) TRIAL AND  
EXPLAINED WHY WE RESTRAINED OURSELVES AT THIS STAGE. I  
EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CONTROVERSY  
OVER THE STATEMENT HERE. I THEN GAVE CHOO MY GENERAL  
ASSESSMENT OF U.S.-KOREA RELATIONS, AND OF THE U.S.  
PERCEPTION OF KOREA, ALONG THE LINES I PROVIDED TO HIS  
COLLEAGUES (REFTELS). I EMPHASIZED IN PARTICULAR THAT BY  
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ESTABLISHING AN ATMOSPHERE OF STABILITY AND CALM, AND BY  
MOVING STEADILY TOWARD LIBERALIZATION OF THE POLITICAL  
REGIME (THE PROMISED CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM AND  
ELECTIONS AND THE LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW), RELATIONSUNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: CHARLES E LAHIGUERA  
DATE/CASE ID: 27 JUN 2005 200501785

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BETWEEN THE U.S. AND KOREA SHOULD DEVELOP SOCIALLY.  
AN ADVERSE OUTCOME OF THE KIM DAE JUNG CASE WOULD BE  
EXTREMELY DAMAGING BECAUSE AMERICANS HAD VERY STRONG  
FEELINGS ON THE MATTER.

4. CHOO LIMITED HIS RESPONSE TO THE KIM DAE JUNG CASE.  
HE NOTED THAT THE CASE IS UNDER JUDICIAL JURISDICTION, AND  
DESPITE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ITS POLITICAL NATURE, THE TRIAL  
HAD FOLLOWED NORMAL CRIMINAL TRIAL PROCEDURES. CHOO  
DENIED THAT KIM IS A POLITICAL RIVAL OF THE REGIME. HE  
NOTED A RUMOR WHICH HE SAID HAS BEEN SPREAD BY KIM'S  
FAMILY AND ASSOCIATES, THAT BECAUSE OF THE INTERVENTION  
OF THE USG THE DEATH SENTENCE WILL NOT BE CARRIED OUT.

5. CHOO SAID HE HAS A FAVORABLE OPINION OF THE U.S. AND  
ITS HABIT OF EXPRESSING ITS CONCERN ON MATTERS OF INTEREST,  
AND THE KIM CASE HAS NOT CHANGED THIS OPINION. SUCH  
EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ARE NATURAL. HOWEVER, THE FINAL  
DECISION IS THE PRESIDENT'S, AND THERE IS NO WAY TO GUESS  
HOW HE WILL DECIDE. APART FROM QUESTION OF THE ADEQUACY  
OF THE EVIDENCE AND THE FAIRNESS OF THE TRIAL, THE  
PRESIDENT'S PRESTIGE IS INVOLVED, AND OVERT PRESSURE WOULD  
BE UNWISE. ESPECIALLY AFTER THE FINDINGS OF THE TRIAL,  
MANY BELIEVE THAT KIM DAE JUNG IS THE CAUSE OF KOREA'S  
RECENT POLITICAL INSTABILITY. CHOO SAID THE UNITED STATES  
MUST TRY TO RESTRAIN ITS PUBLIC COMMENT AND BE PATIENT.  
I SAID WE WERE CURRENTLY FOLLOWING HIS ADVICE.

6. AT THE END OF THE MEETING CHOO RAISED THE SCM IN A  
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LOW KEY WAY. I TOLD HIM FOREIGN MINISTER LHO HAD RAISED  
THE QUESTION WITH ME LAST WEEK, AND THAT I WOULD GIVE HIM  
THE SAME RESPONSE I GAVE LHO. IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO  
DISCUSS THIS ISSUE BEFORE NOVEMBER, THAT IS UNTIL THE  
CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM HERE AND THE ELECTION IN THE  
U.S. HAVE TAKEN PLACE. I SAID PERHAPS THE PLANNED VISIT  
TO WASHINGTON AFTER THE ELECTION OF JCS CHAIRMAN LEW  
BYONG HION (M-R: YI PYONG HYON) WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO BEGIN DISCUSSING THE SCM. CHOO AGREED, BUT HASTENED TO  
ADD THAT LEW'S VISIT AND THE SCM ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.  
I ASSURED HIM THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT.

7. COMMENT: CHOO SEEMED EAGER TO EXPRESS HIS HIGHLY  
ORTHODOX VIEWS ON THE KIM CASE, AND I WAS HAPPY TO PROVIDE  
HIM THE CHANCE TO DO SO. GLEYSTEN

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